

Book Review

HUMAN PEDIGREE STUDIES. Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the Galton Institute, London, 1998. Peel RA, editor. The Galton Institute, 1999. ISBN 0950406643. No price given.

A review of the relationship between Galton and Darwinism in its search for a theory of biological inheritance during the second half of the 19th century; between Galton and the formation of human genetics; between Galton and his followers and the emerging Mendelism of the early 20th century; between Galton and eugenics in this century in England and elsewhere; and even that between the use of Galton's pedigree conventions and eugenic means would require a book larger than the one at hand. And in any event many of these ramifications of Galton's life and work have been discussed at length and in depth in such volumes as that by D.W. Forrest on Galton (1974); Daniel Kevles: "In the Name of Eugenics" (1985); Robert Proctor: "Racial Hygiene" (1988); Mark Adams "The Wellborn Science" (1990) on eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia; Robert Jay Lifton (1986) on "The Nazi Doctors" in general with special treatment of Mengele and his major professor of human genetics, von Verschuer, at the University of Frankfurt; and more narrowly by Pauline M.H. Mazumdar (1992) on "Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings: On the Eugenic Society in Britain."

Nevertheless, this small book of 117 pages has a definite appeal and interest to historians of eugenics and genetics, not the least because two of the contributing authors are our distinguished colleagues in medical and human genetics, Elizabeth Thompson and Robert Resta, both of Seattle, Washington.

Considering the vast body of literature on Galtonism, to a substantial part contributed by Galton himself, the Editor's Introduction by Robert Peel, President of the Galton Institute, is an admirably succinct introduction to Galton's work in heredity (and its initial impetus and motivation), and his introduction (1869) and use of the pedigree in Anglo-American human genetics and eugenics. And while I have strong reservations about the statement that: "In collaboration with Darwin, Galton thus anticipated Mendel's ratios as well as the concept of diploid inheritance," I still find Peel's treatment of Galton a useful introduction to the biometrical aspects of genetics, and the scientific use of the human pedigree.

Anthony Camp was the former Director of the Society of Genealogists, London, and is the present President of the Federation of Family History Societies; he provides a fascinating history of the construction of family histories and of genealogy, primarily from a British perspective, however, with an appropriate tip-of-the-hat to modern computerization and access to public records, especially through the Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

of Salt Lake City, Utah, which has also benefited so much of research in human genetics by my fellow faculty members at the University of Utah.

The contribution of Pauline M.H. Mazumdar, Professor of the History of Medicine, Institute of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology at the University of Toronto to the volume is the Galton Lecture of 1998: "Eugenics, the Pedigree Years" in which she reviews pedigree "methods" from Galton in 1869, the Research Committee of the Eugenics Education Society, set up in response to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law and its eugenic effects, to R.A. Fisher who joined the Research Committee after the (first) war, to the eugenics committee of the American Breeder's Association whose subcommittee on Feeble-mindedness addressed the issue of annihilating the "hideous serpent of hopeless vicious protoplasm," to C.B. Davenport and the Eugenics Record Office of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and his "enforcer" Harry H. Laughlin, to Wilhelm Weinberg who attempted heroically, but in the end unsuccessfully, to impose proper methods of segregation analysis and correction of ascertainment bias on the work of the psychiatrist Ernst Rüdin, who eventually reverted to primitive genealogism, abandoning Mendelism for "empirical genetics prognosis" and, in 1934, becoming one of the authors of the text on the "Law on the Prevention of Genetically Defective Offspring" of 14 July 1933. On the title page of that iniquitous tome Rüdin is identified as the Professor for Psychiatry at the University and Director of the Kaiser Wilhelms-Institute for the Genealogy and Demography of the German Research Institute for Psychiatry at the University of Munich. For further details on the history of British eugenics readers are urged to consult Pauline Mazumdar's above-mentioned authoritative book.

Elizabeth Thompson, the author of the well-known book on Pedigree Analysis in Human Genetics, is Professor of Statistics at the University of Washington, Seattle, and offers an excellent review on Human Pedigrees and Human Genetics, addressing such issues as Mendel's laws and chance events, founder effects in human populations, pedigree relationships and gene identity probabilities, complexity in human pedigrees, and the genetic analysis of complex traits.

Robert Resta, a well-known genetic counselor-humanist brings two contributions to this volume: an update of his earlier paper on the rise of the pedigree in human genetics (*J Genet Counsel* 2:235–260, 1993), and a very well-written and carefully considered chapter on the "Social, ethical and technical implications of pedigree construction: what the maps tell us about the mapmakers" with the instructive example of the Eugenics Education Society's publication of the Wedgewood-Darwin-Galton pedigree, stressing the genius of selected men but omitting the citation of the several individuals who were mentally retarded, epileptic, addicts, deaf and/or consanguineous, including the men-

tally retarded Charles Waring Darwin, born when Emma was 48 and probably suffering from Down syndrome, dying at 18 months.

David Hawgood, an author and publisher in London, provides a useful chapter on computers for research, storage, and presentation of family histories, drawing extensively on his experience constructing his own pedigree using publicly available records in the UK.

I for one greatly enjoyed the book learned much from it, and recommend it enthusiastically to all seeking an introduction to human genealogy, pedigrees, and the involvement of eugenics in their history.

John M. Opitz
University of Utah,
Salt Lake City, Utah